



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

128 - 10th Ave SW • PO Box 42525 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2525 • (360) 725-4000 • Fax (360) 586-8440

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 22, 2005

Contact: Kate Engle Rothschild, CERB Program Manager, 360.725.4058
Michelle Zahrly, CTED Communications Director, 360.725.2801
Paul Gerola, Economic Development Director, Port of Walla Walla, 509.525.3100
Robert Bromley, Mayor, City of Sumas, 360.988.2057
Amber Hansen, Manager, Port of Sunnyside, 509.839.7678

**State Investment to Boost Jobs in Walla Walla and Whatcom Counties,
and Future Economic Growth Planning in Yakima County**

OLYMPIA—More than \$1 million in state investments in Walla Walla, Whatcom and Yakima counties will boost new job opportunities and business growth across the state.

- **In Walla Walla County**, the CERB conditionally approved an \$800,000 loan and \$200,000 grant for the Port of Walla Walla to help build an access road and other improvements to port-owned property next to US Highway 12.
- **In Whatcom County**, CERB conditionally approved a \$19,000 loan and \$73,000 grant for the City of Sumas near the Canadian border to help build a 600-foot extension of an industrial heavy haul road, sewer line extension and associated storm water facilities and engineering.
- **In Yakima County**, the Port of Sunnyside received CERB's conditional approval of a \$45,000 grant to conduct a feasibility study on the Port of Sunnyside's 106-acre East Edison Industrial Park.

These projects were approved by the Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board July 21. CERB is the state's economic development resource focused to help business and industry create and retain jobs in partnership with local government. The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development provides management support.

"The CERB Program is designed to respond to emergent business development needs for public infrastructure and provide long-range feasibility planning to help communities plan for future business development," said Tom Trulove, recently appointed Interim CERB Chair.

"The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is pleased to work with CERB in support of Washington's industrial business climate," said Juli Wilkerson, Director of CTED.

The Walla Walla County project supports a new Washington business, RailEx, LLC, a startup operation producing state-of-the-art fresh packaging facilities stretching from Maine to Florida. RailEx was created to meet the need to transport fresh produce grown on the West Coast to the East Coast.

RailEx is expected to build a \$10 million facility and \$2.5 million “loop track” around Port property near the city of Pasco and community of Wallula. RailEx estimates 148 full-time jobs will be created at wages that exceed the average annual Walla Walla County salary.

According to Port of Walla Walla Commission President, Ken Jantz, "This project solves a major transportation problem that has plagued the Washington State fresh produce industry for years. It will give growers in our state a consistent transportation supply option to get their fresh produce to East Coast customers."

The CERB investment will be matched with \$1.03 million in additional public project costs funded by the Port of Walla Walla, and other sources.

In Whatcom County, the heavy haul road in Sumas allows Canadian-weight trucks, carrying 25 percent more green lumber than trucks can haul on US roads, into the Sumas industrial area for value-added processing.

The immediate need for this road is to provide access to SOCCO Forest Products, a company that kiln-dries green lumber, which is expected to build another kiln to handle high volume of increased demand. The CERB application is contingent upon SOCCO Forest Products proceeding with the dry kiln expansion.

The heavy-haul road improvement will trigger the creation of 96 direct jobs by the value-added forest product companies currently in the Sumas industrial area and an estimated 170 future jobs projected to occur as a result of new industrial property opened up with the road improvement. Annual salaries of the new jobs created exceed the Whatcom County annual average salary.

The CERB investment is matched by \$441,710 from local and private sources for public project improvements.

In Yakima County, the East Edison Industrial Park has been approved as a Planned Unit Development Zone by the City of Sunnyside, granting it industrial, commercial and retail zoning. The project is an extension of the Yakima County “Quick Sites Project” aimed at getting industrial lands ready for development.

“The Port is excited to move forward on this planning project as a key element of good economic growth is good planning,” said Amber Hansen, Port of Sunnyside manager. “CERB is an excellent partner in economic development projects and we look forward to working together again in the future.”

The CERB investment is matched with \$23,000 from local sources.

The release of CERB funds to these projects is contingent on each applicant completing specific pre-contract requirements, such as finalizing other funding sources and obtaining necessary permits.

More information is available at www.cted.wa.gov.

###